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TOAST BY
THE HONORABLE HENRY A. KISSINGER
SECRETARY OF STATE
AT HIS LUNCHEON FOR AFRICAN FOREIGN MINISTERS
AND PERM REPS TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Ladies and gentlemen, friends:

I've been so much in Africa in the past year that I am filing an application to be an honorary member of the OAU. Then you will have to sit through even more of my speeches.

When we met here a year ago, I said that America's policy toward Africa was founded upon three principles:

- that self-determination, racial justice, and human rights spread to all of Africa;
- that Africa attain prosperity for its people and become a strong participant in the international economic order;
- and that the continent be free of great power rivalry or conflict

I think none of us could then have foretold the dramatic events which have taken place this past year in pursuit of each of these goals.

Political Progress

A year ago, events in Rhodesia seemed to be moving inexorably and swiftly toward war -- a war that would have had devastating consequences for that country and its neighbors. There was every prospect of conflict that would leave a legacy of bitterness, division and confrontation that could well set back the progress of southern Africa for generations.

Today, as a result of the resolute determination of the African people and the responsible and far-seeing decisions of their leaders, the situation has changed dramatically. A breakthrough has been achieved. A negotiation is about to begin; the framework of a settlement exists. An opportunity is now before us for a peaceful transition to a majority-ruled multiracial society in Zimbabwe.

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A year ago the prospects were dim that the Namibian problem could be rapidly or satisfactorily resolved.

Today, the inevitability of Namibian independence is accepted by all parties concerned. More important, a way toward agreement among Namibia, South Africa, and the United Nations now appears open. Determined efforts are now underway to bring about a constitutional conference at a neutral location under United Nations aegis -- in which all authentic national forces, specifically including SWAPO, will be able to fashion a design for the new state of Namibia.

And in the course of the year past, the forces of change have asserted themselves dramatically in South Africa. It is manifest that the internal political, economic, and social structure of that country must change. A system based on institutionalized injustice, and that brings periodic violence and upheaval, cannot last. The leaders of South Africa have taken responsible steps to help facilitate a process of change in Rhodesia. The world now looks to them to exercise the same wisdom to bring racial justice to South Africa.

Economic Progress

The past year also has brought the beginnings of what could be a new economic era for Africa. And it is clear that, ultimately, it is economic development which will determine whether the aspirations of the African people for progress and human dignity will be fulfilled.

Africa's great natural wealth and considerable potential for agricultural and industrial development have long been impeded by an array of problems:

- recurrent drought and natural disaster;
- heavy reliance by many nations on the production of a single commodity and, as a result, extraordinary dependence on the vagaries of the world economy; and
- a crushing historical burden of poverty.

In the past year the international community has laid the groundwork for an attack on all these problems. It is increasingly recognized that in place of sporadic relief efforts to ease the after-effects of natural disasters, what is needed is comprehensive international programs to address fundamental conditions. Last May in Dakar I outlined one such program -- a program for international cooperation to help the nations of the Sahel develop additional water resources, increase crop acreage through modern agricultural techniques, and improve food storage -- all aimed at making the Sahel less vulnerable to crisis in the future.

Broad-based multinational cooperation has been accelerated to reform the global economic system for the benefit of the developing nations. In the past year -- since the Seventh Special Session -- major steps proposed at that Session have been implemented and promising new measures discussed. Steps have not only been proposed but carried out --

to expand agricultural production worldwide, to improve the earnings potential and market stability of key raw materials, to reduce trade barriers to tropical product exports into the United States, to help those hard hit by increasing energy costs, and to stimulate the flow of modern technology so as to promote growth and diversify economies now excessively dependent on a single commodity. Africa is a principal beneficiary of these reforms in the international economy.

Africa's trade with and investment from the United States and the industrial nations of the West are crucial, and expanding. Africa wants to earn its way. But for some, particularly the poorest and least developed, trade and investment are not enough to overcome the legacy of pervasive poverty. United States bilateral assistance programs will therefore concentrate increasingly on these countries, and in sectors where the need is greatest.

The United States also believes that closer cooperation among the industrial democracies of North America, Western Europe and Japan can mean a much greater contribution to the economic development of Africa. Therefore we welcome the proposal of President Giscard of France for a fund to organize and coordinate Western assistance efforts to Africa. We hope to move ahead on this proposal. And we are seeking to further strengthen coordination through the OECD to ensure that the collective efforts of the industrial nations are efficiently organized to bring the maximum benefit to Africa.

Economic development is a painful and long-term process which depends most of all on the sustained and substantial efforts of the developing countries themselves. But this has been an historic year in the effort of the community of nations to narrow the gulf between North and South both economically and politically. All those who seek either order or progress are beginning to recognize that we can have neither unless the last quarter of this century is an era of international cooperation.

Independence

The advances made toward racial justice and economic progress -- if they are maintained and built upon -- can strengthen the basis of African unity and self-determination, and thereby serve as a bulwark against unwanted outside intervention in the affairs of the African people.

The United States is firmly committed to the concept of Africa for Africans. That is why, for example, we have agreed with the Presidents of Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia that non-African nations should not deal directly with the liberation movements of southern Africa. The United States seeks no bloc, and plays no favorites among groups or leaders; we will not oppose any African faction or group, regardless of its ideology, if it is truly independent and African. We will continue our firm opposition to the extension of great power rivalry or conflict to the African continent.

The Need to Maintain Momentum

Thus, in the course of the past year, Africa's drive for justice, for progress, for true independence has been severely tested in every dimension. Africa has survived those tests, and finds itself at a possible turning point in its history.

The statesmanship of Africa's leaders has won widespread recognition. The resilience of Africa's economies, and the determination of its peoples to achieve racial justice, have been amply demonstrated to the world.

But progress achieved will not continue automatically. Difficult decisions must be made, additional statesmanship must be shown, if just solutions are to be achieved.

Yet continued progress is crucial: For we are all aware that the important steps toward peace and justice in Rhodesia, steps to avert bloodshed and widening war, can easily be undone. And, there are those who, for their own purposes, do not want to see a peaceful settlement in either Rhodesia or Namibia.

Together, African states, the United Kingdom, and the United States have fashioned an opportunity for peace and foundation for progress in southern Africa. Essential elements of a negotiated settlement have been achieved.

- The authorities in Rhodesia have accepted the principle of majority rule within two years.
- The parties have agreed that an interim government will be established immediately.
- Agreement has been reached on the time and place for a conference.
- A number of Western governments have agreed to participate in a fund to facilitate the transition to majority rule and to enhance the economic future of an independent Zimbabwe.

For the first time in eleven years, a rapid, satisfactory and peaceful end to the Rhodesian crisis is within reach. To lose this opportunity would be monumental tragedy. To seize it can mean a new day of hope to southern Africa. History will not forgive a failure to seize the moment. Whether by neglect or design, such a failure will be tantamount to a decision to choose violence, chaos and widening destruction over a rapid and peaceful solution. No country in Southern Africa will be spared either the pain of warfare or the judgment of history.

Continued movement toward an accord for Namibia is also crucial. My talks with leaders of black African states, the South African Prime

Minister, and Mr. Sam Nujoma of the Southwest African People's Organization lead me to believe that those involved want a peaceful solution and are willing to modify their positions in order to achieve it. As in Rhodesia, success is not assured. Nevertheless, with determination and a readiness to compromise, the parties are now in a position to end the dispute that has been a source of serious international discord for almost three decades.

The focus of the moment is on the southern part of the continent, but the United States' commitment applies to all of Africa, and to all the great issues I have mentioned -- justice, progress, and independence.

Last year I said to the Permanent Members of the OAU who met with me that strengthening the relationship between the United States and Africa is a major objective of American policy. It was then, it is now, and shall continue to be so in the future. Africa can count on us.

There can no longer be any question that America is committed to Africa's goals and to working with the nations of Africa to solve the continent's problems. In return, we expect to find respect for our concerns and perspectives.

Let us set aside the suspicions of the past and work for our common future. Together we can reconstitute the community of man on the basis of mutual benefit and shared endeavor. We can show that races can live together -- that there is an alternative to hatred.

If Africa succeeds, it will have much to teach the world, and so much to contribute to it.

I therefore ask you to join me in a toast:

- to the well being of the peoples of Africa,
- to friendship and cooperation between the United States and Africa, and
- to peace, prosperity and justice for peoples everywhere.

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